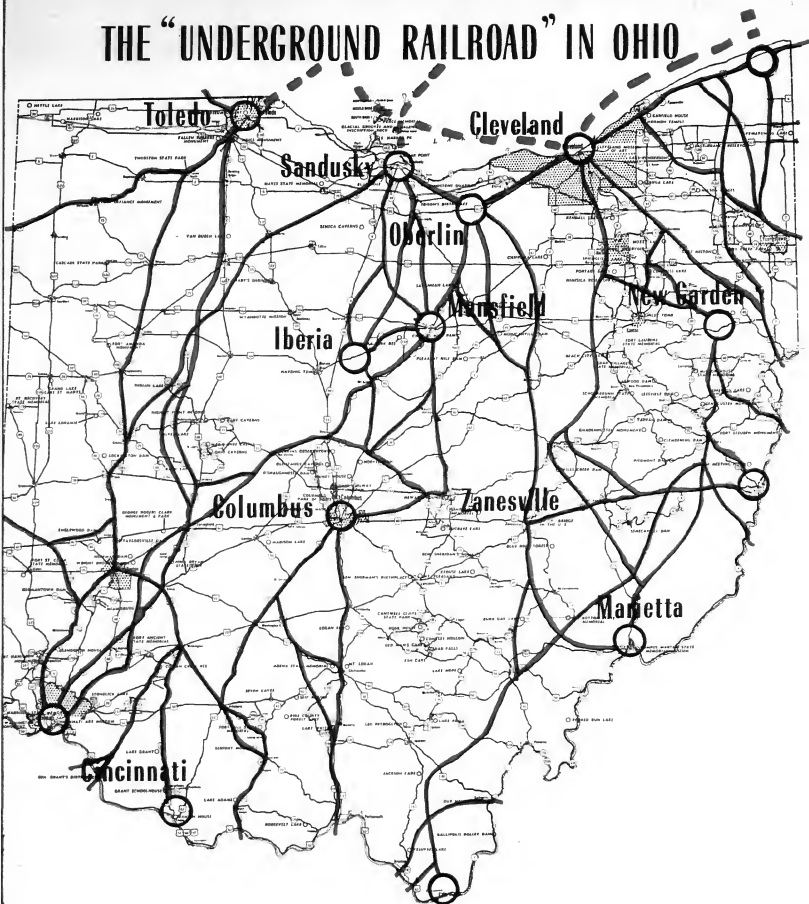


THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN OHIO



THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN RICHLAND COUNTY

Actual Experiences of "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD"
"Conductors" & Other Hitherto Unpublished Material
Gathered by H. Kenneth Dirlam

(Typescript of a talk given to The Exchange Club of Mansfield)

326.977.1
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Spec Coll. -
2-8-65
Anti Slavery

THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN RICHLAND COUNTY

Twenty-five years or more ago, the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce - in advertising to attract new industries - used the slogan "MANSFIELD: The Trunk-Line Railroad Center" - based upon the fact that our city was on the main line of The Pennsylvania, The Erie and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroads. Many years earlier Mansfield had been located on another Railroad - but that fact was not advertised: it was kept a secret . . . for reasons which you will see presently.

Except for Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, of Ohio State University, it would be difficult to tell you very much about this other, un-advertised railroad: anyone connected with it was liable for heavy damages and/or imprisonment . . . consequently few of them kept any records.

* * *

Our story goes back more than a hundred years; it was triggered by the passage, in 1850, of "The Fugitive Slave Law". In the debate leading up to the passage of this Law, Senator Thomas L. Clingman, of North Carolina declared that 30,000 fugitive (run-away) slaves were living in the North - worth, at current prices, \$15,000,000.

In brief, this Fugitive Slave Law provided that "any attempt to rescue, harbor or conceal the fugitive, laid the person interfering liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding 6 months - also made such interfeerer liable for civil damages to the party injured, in the sum of \$1,000 for each fugitive so lost".

At the very hour the Law became effective, James Hamlet, a negro living in New York City, was seized. In spite of the fact that he was a free negro - not a slave - a Miss Mary Brown of Baltimore swore that he was her escaped slave; officers took him while at work; the Commissioner's men hurried him into a private room; tried him within the hour; handcuffed him, pushed him into a carriage, and shipped him off to Baltimore, before he could see his family or communicate with his friends.

The news of Hamlet's arrest spread like wildfire. Abolitionists - particularly the Quakers - determined to circumvent the Fugitive Slave Law by helping run-away slaves escape to Canada . . . the only place they would be safe; while it is true that the Ordinance of 1787 forbade slavery in the NorthWest Territory (later formed into the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin) that underlying Law did not prevent slave owners from seizing run-away slaves in those States.

My wife's grandfather, Thomas Sharp, (manufacturer of engines and machinery) was one of these Quakers; he lived in Salem, Ohio. He began harboring run-away slaves in his basement - then driving them, at night, to the next stop on the road to Painesville. Fortunately he never got caught - though he had several close shaves. When deputy sheriffs & their men from Kentucky would be searching his house, he would follow them around, muttering (under his breath) "If my religion didn't prohibit swearing, I'd curse thee, damn thee!" *Thomas Sharp*

Salem was founded by Quakers from New Jersey. Strong abolitionists... twin brothers - followers of JOHN BROWN - were hanged with him at Harper's Ferry... funeral was long remembered as a tragic page in Salem's history.

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THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN RICHLAND COUNTY

Somebody (we don't know who) named this widespread effort to help run-away slaves "The UNDERGROUND RAILROAD". Just across the Ohio River from slave-owning Kentucky, CINCINNATI became the Southern terminal station of the Underground Railroad and OHIO its principal battleground or field of operations. The reputed President was Quaker LEVI COFFIN, of Cincinnati (he & his wife were said to have aided 3,000 run-away slaves in their flight on the Underground) . . . entertaining as high as 17 fugitives at one time.

Night, of course, was the only time in which the fugitive and his helpers could feel even partially secure. The following is a memorandum from David Putnam, Jr., Point Harmar, Ohio:

August 13/43	Sunday morning	2 o'clock arrived
16	" eve	departed for B
20	" "	10 o'clock dep. for N
wife & 21	Monday morn	2 o'clock arr from B
child'n	" eve	10 o'clock left for H

. . . plainly a schedule of arriving and departing "trains" on the Underground R.R. Much of the communication relating to fugitive slaves had to be in guarded language, pass-words etc. known as the "Grape-Vine Telegraph". Examples:

Mr. I. Newton Peirce forwarded a number of fugitives from Alliance, Ohio to Cleveland, over the Cleveland & Western Railroad. He sent with each company a note to a Cleveland merchant, Joseph Garretson: "Please forward immediately the U.G. baggage this day sent to you."

"To Mr. C.B.C.: By tomorrow's evening mail you will receive two volumes of the "Irrepressible Conflict" bound in black. After perusal please forward."

The Mansfield, Sandusky & Newark Railroad (now the Baltimore & Ohio) was used for transporting fugitives disguised as well-to-do passengers. In some cases live babies were supplied to make fugitive slave women look like nurses. Isaac Patterson had a cave on his farm near Zanesville, where runaways were secreted & fed two or three weeks at a time, till the hunt for them was over . . . then taken in covered wagons to Sandusky - escorted by friends disguised as "hunters" - the covered wagons supposed to contain "deer" they had shot.

*

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*

The safety of fugitives, when traveling by conveyance, lay mainly in concealment. A Clinton County, Ohio Quaker had a large 3-seater wagon made, for the purpose of carrying fugitive slaves. A bookbinder of Troy, Ohio, had a large wagon built with drawers in such a way as to leave a large hiding-place in the center of the wagon bed. William Still gives instances of negroes being placed in boxes, and shipped as freight, by boat and also by rail, to friends in the North. John Weldon and other abolitionists of Dwight, Illinois, took negroes to Chicago concealed in wagons loaded with sacks of grain. Among the Quakers, a woman's costume was a favorite disguise.

March 30th 1960

You have asked the right person about the Under-ground railroad for slaves as it operated in this part of Ohio. My own father Matthias Jr. as a boy of about 14 yrs. drove a farm wagon of Grandfather Days to meet the escaping slaves not far from Cincinnati. The wagon was filled with hay and I believe some produce to disguise its purpose. They were hidden under the hay and kept there until they reached Grandpa's farm (near where the reformatory is) and hidden in the barn loft for the daylight hours but back in the wagon for the night ride on to the Timmings place and on to Sandusky. They were transferred by boat over to Canada. I don't know just how long they stayed there but until it was safe to return to Ohio.

my father who was an Oberlin graduate decided to move his family there to take advantage of the schools and college. Our home on N. Main St. was a stopping place for the gardner Geo. Cabaak who was the leading character of Harriet Beecher Stow's "Uncle Tom's Cabin", Geo. Harris and his wife who was famous for her amazing escape over the Ohio river on the ice.

Fathers work on the underground RR was very dangerous at times when little babies cried or any were very sick

104. A Spring Valley Rd
Donelson, Tenn

Off. M Fanny Day.
(Mary Frances Day)

Mansfielder Founded Daytona Beach, Fla.

As the city of Daytona Beach, Fla., celebrated its 75th anniversary this year, the memory of a former Mansfield man was honored as the original founder of the southern resort city.

He was Mathias Day, for whom the city was named, who had been selling sugar mill machinery and farm implements in the Mansfield area before going to Florida in 1870 with his wife and two children, a son and a daughter.

During the anniversary celebration the former Mansfield man was heralded as a "man of imagination who sought new ventures, who wanted to go to Florida to help re-settle and re-build the land which had once been famous for vast plantations and great living".

WELL INFORMED

Day was well informed on the history of Florida. He knew how colonies and great plantings had risen and then decayed under the rule of Spain and Britain and the War of Independence. He knew of its rebirth after the U. S. flag was unfurled in 1821, only to be ruined by the Seminole Indian War of 1835 which was followed by a devastating freeze which ruined the crops of the plantations.

Day and his family went first to Jacksonville where he met Dr. John M. Hawks, founder of what is now Edgewater, Fla., but was then known as Hawks Park. Dr. Hawks persuaded Day to accompany him on a trip down the coast on the Schooner Rover, a six-ton vessel. The two men spent several days inspecting the area, cruising up and down both sides of the river.

DIARY REVEALED

In his diary, contents of which were revealed at the celebration, Day noted there were "10 million fleas in the square yard". Then he came upon the little Tomoka settlement and saw what he wanted, an old sugar and orange plantation which was abandoned and covered with second growth timber.



MATHIAS DAY

It was the Spanish Crown's royal grant to Samuel Williams in 1790, which had been settled in 1800 and developed by 1812 with slave labor.

The land, 3000 acres, had descended to Williams' son, Samuel Hill Williams, who in 1835 had hidden behind a palmetto tree and watched the Seminoles destroy his home and the plantation, then at night swam the river and escaped to St. Augustine.

Day bought 2.42 acres of this grant from Samuel H. Williams for which, the story is told, he paid \$1200 down and gave a mortgage of \$8,000. Then he returned to Mansfield where he assembled men and machinery to start a colony. In his party were his nephew, Calvin Day, and two other Mansfielders, identified only as Webber and Skelton.

SAWMILL SET UP

A sawmill was set up by the local men and the group began cutting lumber for the first project, a roomy hotel which was first named Colony House, and later named Loomis House for the Day's son. The hotel was operated for the purpose of providing a home for newcomers until they could build their own.

However, a schooner from Jacksonville failed to deliver shingles for the roof on time, so the building was thatched with palmetto fronds, and acquired the nickname, the Palmetto House, by which it was known until it burned in 1926.

This building was the site for many years of the community's society activities. By the end of 1871 Day's aims were well-known and were beginning to take shape under an engineer's surveying chain. The natives of that area knew Day had come to build a town. He laid out broad parkways which today serve as the main arteries of traffic in downtown Daytona Beach.

A short while later a committee of three citizens, searching for a new name for the town, proposed either Daytown or Daytona. A town meeting was called to choose the name, but Mathias Day did not attend because by that time he realized the venture had been a failure and he had returned to Mansfield. He had sold lots for as little as \$25 and \$34, and land records show that he was unable to make the payments due on his land and he was forced to return it to its original owners.

There is no record of the Day family's activities following their return to Mansfield.

The DAYTONA BEACH EVENING NEWS of Thursday, July 26, 1951 carried a feature illustrated story on the occasion of the City's 75th birthday with photos of Mathias Day and family; also in the photograph taken under the big tree on Day's Daytona Beach property, several other former residents of Mansfield: Mrs. John Blymyer, Mrs. Emma Alden Proctor, Hattie Au (of the Frank Au family).

... Above story appeared in

Mansfield-News-Journal

THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN RICHLAND COUNTY

There used to be a saying hereabouts that the Presbyterians were, in earlier days around Mansfield, opposed to liberating the slaves, while the Congregationalists were abolitionists (in favor of freeing them) However that may be, it was a United PRESBYTERIAN, JOHN FINNEY, who was one of the leading Abolitionists in the County; his place (a farm at the junction of Walker Lake Road & Lexington SpringMill Road) was the most noted station on the Underground Railroad in North Central Ohio. My grandfather, Judge Darius Dirlam, told me this story about him (supplemented by surviving members of the Finney family):

Finney was a large man - with strong convictions. As the story goes, he had been harboring several run-away slaves on his place; during the night preparations had been made to drive them on toward Oberlin - the next North station of the Underground. Just before sun up the following morning, a Kentucky sheriff with several of his deputies, drove up to the farm lane, where Finney happened to be standing. He was equal to the occasion:

"Gentlemen - it is still quite early - probably you haven't had breakfast yet - you must come in and join us - we're just ready to sit down" (at his first chance, he dispatched one of the children to round up a number of additional Finneys living near by - and have them come over at once) So that by the time everybody was seated, there were a dozen or so at the table - including the Kentucky sheriff and his deputies.

Speaking to the Sheriff seated next to him at the head of the table, Mr. Finney explained that - before they were to partake of the food, it was the family custom to have a prayer of thanks (which he proceeded to offer - making it plenty long. Next in the family breakfast procedure - the reading of a chapter in the Bible Stepping to a side table, he brought back the large, old fashioned family Bible, and when he was again seated, read the first verse in the chapter he had selected - then passed the Bible to the Sheriff next to him - and asked him to read the second verse - and so on around the table until the entire chapter had been read. The chapter in question I am going to read to you now - you will quickly "catch on" as to why Mr. Finney selected this particular one.

"Psalm 119: Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. (2) Blessed are they that keep his testimonies.....(13) (second round) With my lips have I declared all judgments of thy mouth. (25) (third round) My soul cleaveth unto the dust.....(37) (fourth round) Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.....(49) (fifth round) Remember the word.....(61) (sixth round) The hands of the wicked have robbed me. (73) (seventh round) Thy hands have made me.....(85) eighth round).....and so on until the final (176th) verse."

By the time the final (176th) verse in the chapter had been read, and the Kentucky sheriff and his deputies had been served "seconds" of a hearty Richland County farm breakfast: ham & eggs, griddle cakes with maple syrup, strawberry jam and toast and other "fixins" . . . and after breakfast the Sheriff and his deputies searched the house from cellar to attic - then the barn (particularly the hay-mow) and then the large corn crib & other out buildings . . . By the time all this had been done, the fugitives were out of reach - well on their way to Oberlin.



HEBEL, SECRETARY
NGE AVENUE
EACH, FLORIDA

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

~~SECRET~~

Anti-Slavery

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Map OF THE TOWN OF MANSFIELD

RICHLAND COUNTY

1853

JOHN BEVAN City Engineer
LITH BY SARGENT & CO.

METHODIST
CHURCH

GRAVEYARD

GRANDMAN
CHURCH

TANNERY

TANNERY

TANNERY

TANNERY

TANNERY

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TANNERY

VOLUSIA COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

IANTHE BOND HEBEL, SECRETARY
519 ORANGE AVENUE
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

July 31, 1960

The Richland County Historical Society
Mansfield, Ohio

Gentlemen:-

Daytona was founded 90 years ago by your townsman, Matthias Day, Jr., and his relatives by marriage were long winter residents here. We are planning the October unveiling of a marker on the site of The Colony House, the first building erected here. The place was also named for him.

Very truly yours,

Santha Bond Hebel

Mrs. John E. Hebel

THE REPUTED PRESIDENT OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
Mr. Coffin and his wife aided more than 3000 slaves in their flight.



*Yours Truly
Levi Coffin*

196 Valencia Drive
Ormond Beach, Fla.

April 29, 1963

Herewith the photo of Mathias Day with some of his family and friends along with a copy of the writing on the back of the original photo.

Any credit on publication should be given to the Halifax Historical Society, Daytona Beach, Florida, which helped supply the original photograph.

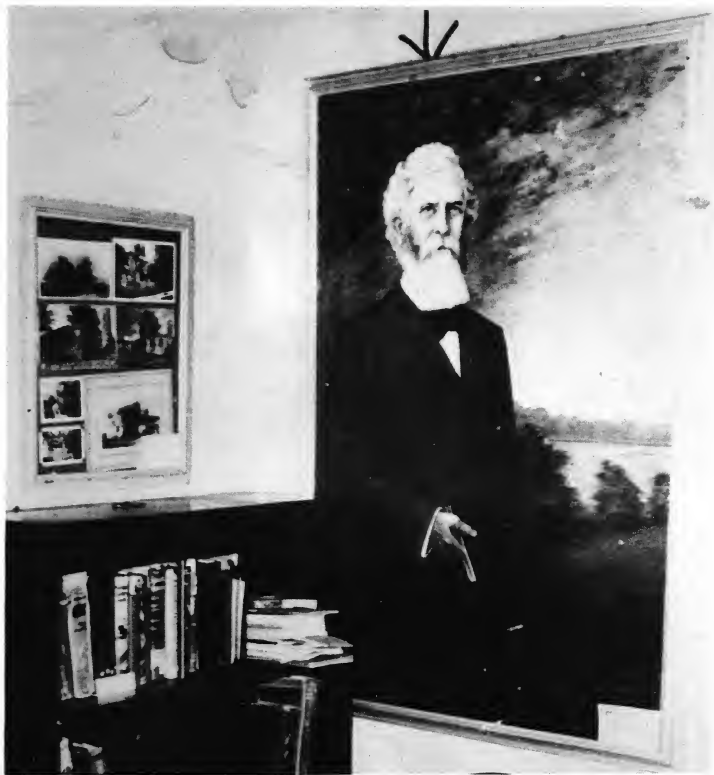
Thanks,

Jack Jessee



Mathias Day, who gave his name to the Town of Daytona, and to the City of Daytona Beach, is shown above with some of his family and friends. Day is at the right. Others in the picture, from l. to r. are: Mary Grimes, Mansfield; Mrs. L. Grimes, Mansfield; W. M. Saint, Canada; Mrs. Emma Proctor, Boston; Mrs. John Blymyer, Mansfield; Mrs. Mathias Day (seated on bench); Mrs. Isaac Jennings, Bennington, Vt.; and (next to Day) his daughter Mary (Fannie) Day. In the tree at left: Miss Maskey, Canada; Charles Day (Mr. Day's son; Catherine Kinsell, Columbus, Ohio; and Mrs. Hattie Barton, Mansfield.

Photo courtesy Halifax Historical Society, Daytona Beach, Florida.



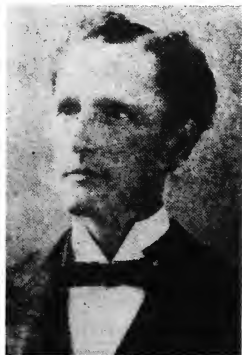
This portrait of Mathias Day, now in a display at the Daytona Beach Historical Museum, was not liked by the family.

Photos courtesy Daytona Beach Morning Journal.

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Beach Street, as seen from near Loomis Avenue to the north, appeared quite a bit different near the turn of the century from the way it appears today. In the background is the old Yacht Club and one time train station. The train station was later converted into a fire station and jail. The present City Bus terminal is on the site.



Mathias's son, Loomis, an early settler, was one of the founders of Ormond, now Ormond Beach.

The Wellington Rescue

A lawless expedition a hundred years ago
brings respectability to a "subversive community"

By ROBERT S. FLETCHER, '20

OVERLIN was notorious almost from the hour of its beginning. Its notoriety was the inevitable fruit of its uniqueness. "Oberlin is peculiar," wrote the Founder proudly. "Oberlin is peculiar in that which is good." There was considerable doubt in the minds of outsiders as to how good it was, but there was pretty general agreement that it certainly was peculiar.

This was the best-advertised college in one of the best-advertised communities in the country. It was advertised by its financial agents, who begged for funds throughout the northern states and England. It was advertised by the religious periodical published there, the *Oberlin Evangelist*, which circulated widely among pious Protestants north of Mason and Dixon's Line. It was advertised by its former students, who were numerous; its enrollment just before the Civil War was probably larger than that of any other American educational institution. Oberlin students and alumni attracted more attention than those from other schools because of their lean and lank, vegetarian countenances, their worn and even ragged raiment and the determined look in their eyes as they went about "elevating female character," civilizing the Ojibwas, putting an end to war, and freeing slaves.

A hundred years ago, if you had a sure-fire scheme for salvation in this world or the next, it was obvious that you would be drawn to the kindred spirits at Oberlin, provided you didn't join Joseph Smith's Latter Day Saints, the perfectionists at Oneida, or Owen's New Harmony. As a result, every other house on Professor Street and every third room in the dormitories was occupied by some sort of a prophet. The tradition that Oberlin always had a rather high percentage of "characters" is not without some historical documentation.

The most effective kind of publicity was the self-propelled variety, not shouted from the house-tops, but whispered wherever male and female gossips were gathered together. In Oberlin, they said, several students had starved to death on the diet of sawdust-bread and water. At Oberlin, it was reported, the white students had to eat at the second table. But the horrors of coeducation constituted the most popular topic, the possibilities being limited only by the fertility of the gossip's imagination.

In some communities, it was desirable for a stranger to be pretty well dressed, demonstrate open repugnance to Negroes, have a little fat on him, a smile on his face and a general aroma of alcohol, otherwise he might be mistaken for an Oberlinian. This was especially important in towns



Henry Everard Peck, associate professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy was among those imprisoned for his part in the Rescue.

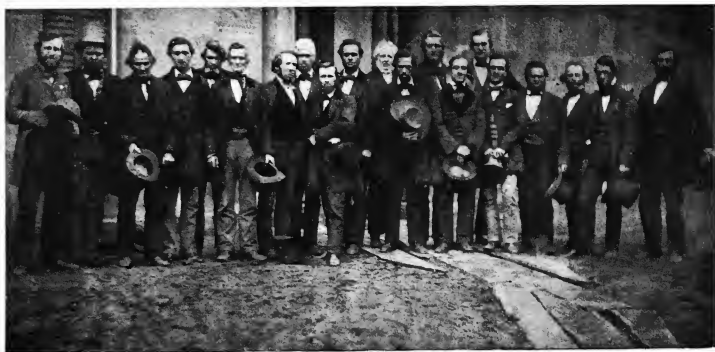
While in jail he was permitted to preach from the jail doorway to a crowd gathered in the jail yard.

where rough rails, a supply of tar and goose-feathers, and overage eggs were kept on hand for emergencies. A few years ago a descendant of one of the Oberlin pioneers offered the college a coat worn by his great-grandfather in the line of duty. He felt that it should be preserved, because, after a century, it still had rotten egg on it.

Between 1839 and 1843 four different bills were introduced into the Ohio legislature for the repeal of the Oberlin College charter. The sponsors demonstrated to their own satisfaction that the college and the town constituted a public nuisance and were clearly subversive and un-American. The fourth of these measures failed of passage by only one vote.

The Underground Railroad

Yes, Oberlin was on the "Underground Railroad," though only metaphorically so, the existence of various caves and tunnels under First Church or Sturges Hall never having been demonstrated by the speleologists. Fugitives from Southern bondage are known to have passed through on their way to British freedom as early as 1837, less than



The Oberlin Rescuers at Cuyahoga Co. jail, April 1859. Left to right: Jacob R. Shipherd (a student), Orindatus S. B. Wall (colored shoe-maker), Loren Wadsworth, David Watson, W. Evans, E. Boyce, Ralph Plumb (attorney-at-law and Republican politician), Henry Evans, Simeon Bushnell (who carried Price to Oberlin from Wellington), J. Scott, Moses Gillett (Wellington), Charles Langston, A. W. Lyman (a student), J. Bartlett, W. E. Lincoln (a student) Richard Winsor (a student and the actual rescuer), J. Watson, J. M. Fitch (proprietor of the bookstore and superintendent of the Sunday School), Professor Henry E. Peck, and Daniel Williams.

(From an original photograph in the possession of Mrs. Brandt, Pittsfield, Ohio)

four years after John Jay Shipherd presided over the first all-college assembly in a building approximately on the site of the present Herrick's jewelry store.

A strengthened federal Fugitive Slave Law was passed by Congress in 1850. It provided that federal marshals should assist the Southern slave hunters in running down slaves escaping to the North. Any person who interfered with such officers of the law, when engaged in returning an alleged fugitive to the South, might be subject to a fine of not more than a thousand dollars and imprisonment for not more than six months.

Most Oberlinians refused from the beginning to recognize this act as either constitutional or morally binding. Repeatedly the student literary societies debated the question whether this law should be obeyed or flouted and whether it was un-Christian to resist its enforcement. But not until 1858, a hundred years ago, was the theory put to the acid test.

A colored man by the name of John Price arrived in town at least as early as March of that year. We know this because newly-arrived Negroes were regularly cared for out of the township poor funds, and charges for John Price's board and room and for the keep of other so-called "transient paupers" or "poor strangers" are recorded in the township records. Throughout the ensuing summer Russia Township (that's the name) paid \$1.25 or \$1.50 a week for the maintenance of this historic fugitive.

Outraged Respectability

But there were Democrats in Oberlin. Their strongholds were all on South Main Street: Wack's Tavern (or Russia House) on the east side, the Episcopal Church across from it, and Munson's blacksmith shop on the little knoll above the creek nearby. In Democratic administrations Black-smith Munson was also postmaster, the official local representative of the party of Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk and (in 1858) of James Buchanan.

The Episcopal Church was established as a missionary

enterprise in Oberlin, avowedly to counteract the "indecent dogmatism," and the "disgusting puerilities" of the Congregationalists and President Finney. The alliance of the First Church, the College, radical abolitionism, and the Republican party faced the combination of the Christ Episcopal Church, "law and order," and the Democrats.

The most prominent local Democrats were Postmaster Munson, Chauncey Wack, proprietor of the tavern, and a lawyer by the name of Anson P. Dayton. Munson and Dayton were pillars of the Episcopal parish; Dayton's name heads the first list of parishioners. As was natural, Dayton, being a loyal Democratic party man, was appointed United States Deputy Marshal to uphold the majesty of the federal law and particularly of the Fugitive Slave Law in Oberlin. Immediately his eye fell on John Price, who was probably worth a thousand dollars or more. One can imagine Dayton and Munson foregathering in Wack's secret tap room and planning their strategy. Late in August two agents of a Kentuckian who claimed ownership of Price and two more federal marshals appeared and took up their residence at Wack's. Their arrival, of course, did not go unnoticed, and soon the whole town was seething.

The Capture

The situation being so explosive, the representatives of the party of law and property rights decided to resort to a ruse. Rather than make the arrest right in Oberlin, a thirteen-year-old farm boy by the name of Shakespeare Boynton was hired to lure the fugitive out of town. Shakespeare persuaded Price to ride with him into the country on the excuse that his father needed help to dig some potatoes.

When the boy and the colored man had ridden a mile or so east of the village, they were overtaken by another carriage containing the slavecatchers. Shakespeare later testified that the Negro was nonchalantly picking his teeth with his pocket-knife when his pursuers appeared. They

made him give up his knife, hustled him into their buggy and drove off along a diagonal road (the present Route 20 and Hallauer Road) to Pittsfield and Wellington.

A couple of students hitch-hiking through Pittsfield saw the party and, divining what was going on, hustled back to Oberlin to report. The abolitionists stood not upon the order of their going. Never before and seldom since have so many from Oberlin headed for Wellington at the same time. They rode in carriages and wagons and on horseback. Some walked. They included students, faculty members, professional men, artisans, storekeepers—a few women. Simeon Bushnell, a clerk in Fitch's bookstore, outdistanced most of the others in his light buckboard drawn by a pair of fast trotters.

In the meantime, the federal officers and the slavecatch-

Bushnell whipped up his team and clattered off to Oberlin. James H. Fairchild, a professor of mental and moral philosophy, and later president of the college, hid the fugitive in his attic for two or three days. Then John Price went on to Canada and freedom and oblivion.

The Law Moves In

This was, of course, a clear breach of the fugitive slave law, and it was to be expected that charges would be brought against the rescuers. It was the duty of federal attorneys and courts to enforce the law, and, besides, it would be most salutary to make an example of notorious Oberlin, and thus give fair warning to other Republicans and operators of the Underground Railroad.

OUT-JAIL!

THE RESCUERS

Are coming TO-NIGHT!

At a public Meeting at the Mayor's Office it was voted that the citizens, en masse, turn out to meet them at the CARR, and escort them to the Church for Public Reception. The undersigned were appointed a Committee of Arrangement.

The committee appointed Father Keep for President of the Meeting at the church, and Fred. J. M. Ellis, Marshall. All the citizens are invited to meet the Rescuers at the Depot at half-past seven. The procession will form after the Band in the following order:

The Mayor and Council; The Fire Department in Uniform; The Rescuers; The Citizens.

Let there be a grand gathering!
Oberlin, July 6. By order of Committee of Arrangement.

(Original in the Oberlin College Library)

ers had taken their captive to an upper floor of a Wellington hotel to await the arrival of the next train for Columbus and points south. There had been a fire in the morning, so many farmers were in town, reluctantly considering the advisability of returning to the dull routine on their respective farms. The invasion from Oberlin coagulated the little knots of loungers into a crowd of perhaps five hundred in the street before the hotel.

There was no overt violence, but the numerical superiority and angry mood of the local Yankees was somewhat overawing. The more aggressive persons pushed their way up the stairs to the door of the room where John Price was held. There followed a good deal of parleying and some shoving. College students put up a ladder and climbed in the window. Price was pulled away from his captors and passed over the heads of the besiegers down the stairs and out to Simeon Bushnell's waiting carriage.*

*A letter from John W. Love, '14, business editor of the *Cleveland Press* and trustee of the College, received a few days before his tragic death in an automobile accident on September 28, called attention to the fact that one of the men who snatched Price away from his captors was William E. Lincoln, father of John C. Lincoln, founder of the Lincoln Electric Company of Cleveland, and James E. Lincoln, chairman of the company. Mr. James F. Lincoln was given an honorary degree by the College at the 125th Anniversary Celebration, October 18.

In December a number of Oberlin and Wellington citizens were indicted. Among them were Simeon Bushnell, his employer, James M. Fitch, bookseller and superintendent of the Sunday school, the Reverend Mr. Henry E. Peck, associate professor of mental and moral philosophy, several college students, and a number of colored men. These persons were to be tried, one at a time, before the Federal District Court in Cleveland beginning early in April, 1859.

Bushnell was dealt with first. Most of Oberlin's Democrats appeared as witnesses against him. A number of leading Republicans were called for the defense. He was found guilty and sentenced to sixty days and a six-hundred dollar fine. A young free colored man received a smaller fine and was imprisoned for a briefer period. The court then recessed until July.

All the Wellingtonians were given nominal fines and allowed to go home. The remaining Oberlinians could have done the same, but they preferred to stay in the Cuyahoga County Jail because of a technical point of honor. In the jail, of course, they could exploit their martyrdom for the benefit of the Republican Party and to the discredit of the Fugitive Slave Law and Democrats.

The sheriff and jailer had Republican leanings and did

(Continued on page 23)

The Wellington Rescue

(Continued from page 6)

everything possible to make their guests comfortable. An Oberlin shoemaker opened a shoe shop in "Cell No. 3, upstairs." A saddler set up business in the jail yard. Eager beaver students called loudly and publicly for their textbooks. Mr. Fitch edited and printed in the jail one issue of a newspaper, called the *Rescuer*.

Mr. Fitch was, of course, kept away from his duties as Sunday school superintendent, so some four hundred Oberlin Sunday-school children were put on a special train and taken to see him. The members of the Sunday school of the Plymouth Congregational Church of Cleveland met them at the station and all together marched behind a brass band to the jail. They picnicked on the Public Square and were received behind bars by their superintendent in class groups.

In the meantime the three men who had seized Price and taken him to Wellington were indicted in the county court at Elyria on charges of kidnapping. It looked as if these proceedings would be pretty much stacked in favor of the Republicans and against all Democrats and Southerners. Therefore, a deal was arranged whereby the indictments against the Kennuckians and the remaining Oberlin Rescuers were all dropped.

Hail To The Heroes

On July 6, 1859, the prisoners were released and marched to the railroad station escorted by a guard of honor of Cleveland citizens. Hecker's Brass Band led the way and, as the train pulled out for Oberlin, played *Home, Sweet Home*.

At Oberlin the Rescuers were greeted by most of the citizenry, all of the students and faculty, the Oberlin band, and the fire companies in their red uniforms. In the First Church there was standing room only. Wreaths of flowers were thrown upon the heads and shoulders of the heroes as they marched down the aisles to their seats on the platform. The full choir sang the *Marseillaise*, accompanied by the organ. The Cleveland sheriff and jailer

shared honors with Oberlin's own. Everybody made speeches and everybody applauded. It was nearly midnight when a full-throated Doxology was sung.

The senior class presented Professor Peck with a full set of the works of W. H. Prescott, and a subscription was taken up to buy Mr. and Mrs. Fitch one of the newfangled sewing machines. Lawyer Dayton was run out of town and told never to come back. In 1861 Abraham Lincoln appointed the first in a long line of Republican postmasters, and Mr. Munson went back permanently to his blacksmith shop.

With the growth in power of the Republican party Oberlin began to be looked upon much more favorably, in many quarters in the North at least. The rescue, actually an act of lawlessness, was, ironically, a considerable factor in making Oberlin more respectable. I know of no documented instances since 1860 of persons being rotten-egged merely because they came from Oberlin.

They say that on dark, windy nights in September you can hear Simeon Bushnell's carriage rattling up the road from Wellington, stopping at the light at Route 20, and then sweeping on over the railroad tracks into Oberlin. And don't be surprised if, at midnight, when passing by some lonely field between Oberlin and Elyria, you should catch a glimpse of a shadowy figure digging potatoes—where none have been planted for one hundred years—since 1858. You will know who it is if every now and then he leans on his fork and picks his teeth with his pocket knife. And, perhaps, if you listen closely, you may hear the pale, cold notes of bugles and the sound of many marching men.

Robert S. Fletcher, '20, Ph.D., Harvard, '38, is professor of history at Oberlin, and chairman of the department. He is a specialist in American history, and his two volume *History of Oberlin*, published in 1943, is a definitive work. A frequent lecturer for civic and community organizations, he has contributed to various historical reviews and has appeared before in the pages of the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*. He is married to the former Mary Elizabeth Abbey, and their son, Daniel Oliver, graduated from Oberlin in 1952.

Reprinted from "The Oberlin Alumni Magazine" for November 1958

From The Mansfield SHIELD & BANNER of Saturday, July 16, 1887

"Aunt" Bradford, the well known colored woman of this city, died at her home on Marion Avenue, Tuesday evening (July 12) after a lingering illness of a little over a year. She was about 70 years of age. Her early life was spent in Texas in the household of Sam Houston, having been born on his plantation. Her mother, she claimed, was a beautiful Creole woman, while her father had Indian blood in his veins.

She early went to New York City where she married a colored coachman, who removed with her to Mansfield after the death of their only child. She became familiar with many of the scenes of the late Rebellion as the servant of Col. Ford's daughter. Her husband died soon after the War; since which time she has been able by her industry and frugality to pay for her home and earn a competency. As a caterer at social events she was unexcelled, and displayed in everything she attempted, wonderful executive ability.

"Aunt" Bradford was the especial friend of the children of this city. Her kindly ministrations to the sick and needy won for her the grateful remembrance of many friends. The funeral of the deceased was held from the Congregational Church of which she had long been a member, at 4 o'clock p.m. Thursday, and was largely attended.

(Shield & Banner of July 23rd/1887) "In the Probate Court this week Fred E. Tracy was appointed executor of the estate of Frances Ellen Bradford deceased...The last WILL & Testament of the deceased was admitted to probate".

From WILL RECORD No. 9 pages 4 & 5/1887 Probate Court
Record of Inventories filed April 6/1888; Vol. 14 Page 75

The WILL

"In the name of the Benevolent Father of all, I - FRANCES ELLEN BRADFORD of the City of Mansfield, County of Richland, and State of Ohio, knowing the uncertainty of life and desiring that after my death my property be disposed of in a certain manner, for certain objects, and to certain persons, do make, and publish this, my last WILL and Testament --

First: It is my wish that my executors convert the property I may be possessed of at my death into money. I desire that my real estate be sold on such time payments as will enable my executors to realize the most for the same; that the deferred payments thereon be secured by mortgages on said real estate, and that they bear interest from date of sale.

I desire the twelve solid silver spoons given me by Mrs. R.M. Sturges, be given to Sadie L. Avery.

I desire my executors exercise their judgment and give my clothing & bedding to such missionary or benevolent objects as they may deem best, and my pictures to the First Congregational Sunday School of Mansfield, Ohio and to my friends - and the balance of my personal property be sold at private or public sale as they may see fit.

Second: I desire all my just debts be paid including my funeral expenses and the expense of placing on the monument now standing on my burial lot, such an inscription to my memory as my executors may deem suitable. I desire that the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100) be placed in the hands of the Trustees of the Mansfield Cemetary Association, to be by them placed at interest with good security, the interest of which sum shall be expended in keeping my burial lot and monument in good order.

Third: As a token of my love for Daisy Barker, I desire in case she graduates at the Public High School in Mansfield, Ohio, the sum of Fifty Dollars (\$50) be given to her to further fit herself for usefulness.

Fourth: I desire my executors to invest the residue of my estate in safe securities which shall constitute a permanent fund for the benefit of the Sabbath School Library of the First Congregational Church of Mansfield, Ohio, of which church I am a member. One half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the interest arising from said fund I direct to be added each year to said fund until the said fund shall amount to One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) The other half of said interest arising from said fund, from year to year, I desire to be expended by or under the direction of the Pastor and the Sabbath School Superintendent of said First Congregational Church, whoever they may be at the time said interest is expended, in books suitable for the library of said Sabbath School - when said fund shall amount to One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000). Then I direct that all the interest arising from said fund be expended for said Sabbath School Library in the manner aforesaid.

If by reason of death or of any other cause, my executors cannot attend to said fund, it is my wish that the Trustees of the First Congregational Church of Mansfield, Ohio shall act as Trustees of said fund to carry out the object of said fund and in the manner aforesaid.

Fifth: I do hereby nominate and appoint Frederick E Tracy and Willis M. Sturges executors of this my last WILL and Testament, hereby authorizing and empowering them to adjust and discharge the debts and claims due me. I do also authorize and empower them to sell by private sale or in such manner, upon such terms of credit or otherwise as they may think proper, all my real estate and deeds to purchasers to execute, acknowledge and deliver in fee simple.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 18th day of February in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-six.

(signed) Frances Ellen Bradford

Signed and acknowledged by said Frances Ellen Bradford as her last WILL and Testament, in our presence, and signed by us in her presence.

F. E. TRACY
MARTHA J. WHISSEMORE
H. HILL HEDGES

PS. The First Congregational Church was organized in April/1835. In the Church Memorial Manual of 1882 Ellen Bradford is listed as a member who had united with the Church April 17/1864 on confession of faith.

The proceeds from the sale of Aunty Bradford's property were put on a Savings Account in The Mansfield Building & Loan Association; the interest being withdrawn and invested in new books for the First Congregational Church Sunday School library from time to time. My wife, Reba Baxter Dirlam,* was the librarian for a number of years and I was the Assistant librarian. The new books were selected by a committee consisting of Mrs. Alfred Hand, Mrs. Roeliff Brinkerhoff, Charles Harroun and my wife. These new books of course had to be suitable for a Sunday School library; consequently the committee had quite a task to make sure that off-color literature didn't worm its way in (even though filthy books such as flood the market nowadays were non-existent then). When the new books selected were to be given out, a list of them was printed in the Church Bulletin - with occasional amusing results, since the "copy" for the printer had to be prepared in something of a hurry. For example; in one such listing; of two new books: "Your Child and Mine" "From The Bottom Up"

Thanks to Aunty Bradford's bequest the Sunday School library included many fine books - not only members of the Sunday School but also many Church members being borrowers. Unfortunately the entire library was destroyed when the church was burned to the ground February 17/1942. The same program - new books for the Sunday School library** from the Aunty Bradford fund*** - is being continued in the beautiful new Congregational Church at the corner of Marion Avenue and Millsboro Road..with the large picture of Aunty Bradford on the library wall...as a reminder.

*When a child of seven, Reba was taken to see Aunty Bradford by Mrs. Patterson. The two of them knelt down beside Aunty Bradford's bed in her last illness, and as Mrs. Patterson prayed for her, Aunty kept fervently repeating "Amen!" "Amen!"

***Aunty Bradford Memorial Library" Anne Parsons Radojcsics (Mrs. Jos.M. Jr.) librarian.

***\$2,000

* * * *

The old Congregational Church on Park Avenue West already had a library before the setting up of the Aunty Bradford fund; it occupied a nitch to the right as you came in the West ground level entrance. In those days most books were published with dull brown or gray color covers - not very inviting looking. Later - after the setting up of the Aunty Bradford fund - the library was greatly enlarged and moved to the rear of the main Sunday School room - across the hall from the Primary Department, where Aunty Bradford had been in charge for so many years.

Mansfield's First Library

According to a feature article in the Mansfield NEWS-JOURNAL of February 17/1957 the first traceable effort to establish a library of any kind in Mansfield dates back to the year 1859, when Colonel Alexander McIlvaine began a small library for the use of members of the Order of American Mechanics. Consisting of only one small book-case full of volumes, the library was scattered when most of the members entered military service. This mechanics library was housed in the Society's rooms in the old Market House. A few years later, in 1868, the YMCA formed a library association. Books and periodicals were kept in rooms in the Sturges Building. In 1871 a group of Mansfield men formed the Mansfield Lyceum and elected Colonel Barnabus Burns as president. The Lyceum was not a public library but was intended to be so ultimately. The members could read in the Sturges Building rooms where they also listened to lectures and debates.

The money derived from lectures was invested in good books. Committees went about the city soliciting books for the Lyceum. Finally in 1873, the Lyceum became what might be called the first public library in the city. Moved to the basement of the Court House, the books were made available to readers paying a yearly fee of one dollar.

Our present Public Library was started four years later; the following account from the Minute Book:

"Pursuant to a call made through the City Papers a company of ladies numbering about fifty, met at the home of Mrs. H.M. Weaver, Thursday p.m. February 17/1887 for the purpose of organizing a society to work in the interest of a Public Library. Meeting called to order by Mrs. Weaver. On motion Mrs. W.J. Huggins and Mrs. George Mitchell were appointed President and Secretary pro tem. The President then introduced Mrs. J.E. Dixon, of Columbia College Library, who gave a bright & interesting talk on library work...suggested that the Mansfield ladies start out upon the basis of a Memorial Hall & Library, and that the Association present the matter to McLaughlin Post G.A.R. and ask them to petition the Legislature for a tax to be levied upon the City and Township for this purpose. Election of officers resulted as follows: President: Mrs. W.J. Huggins; Vice Presidents: Mrs. S.A. Bronson; and Mrs. D.J. Meese; Treasurer; Mrs. H.M. Weaver; Secretary: Mrs. George Mitchell. Membership fee fixed at \$1.00*.

The plan was successful and the Madison Township Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Building was erected in 1888.....with the Public Library on the ground floor, where it remained until moved to the Carnegie Library on Third Street.

*Among interesting projects for the benefit of Memorial Library Association was the home talent production of "THE DISTRICT SCHOOL" whose program and cast of characters is shown on the accompanying page. I can remember seeing it - very entertaining performance - with both my father and mother taking part. (courtesy Harriet Hedges Princehorn)

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Quoting from an interesting paper "ABOUT AUNTY BRADFORD" by Mrs. Emma W. Gilbert (1961)

The family of Avery C. Hand have in their possession a china plate given to Sara Avery Hand by Aunty Bradford, bearing this typewritten note, pasted on the bottom:

"This plate belonged to Governor Samuel Houston, and was among the dishes buried outside of the Executive Mansion, to hide them during the Mexican invasion of Texas. Afterward the plate was given to Aunty Bradford's mother, who was a slave in the Houston household. Aunty Bradford gave it to Sara Avery Hand about 1885. The plate was supposed to be 175 years old then".



A periodical of the American National Emancipation Authority in Cleveland is soon to have a story about the late Mrs. John (Ellen) Bradford, a Mansfield colored woman who became a member of First Congregational Church here in 1864. She left most of her estate to the church's Sunday School library. The picture of her was copied from one which commemorates her in the church.



Public Letters (News-Journal Oct 25/1963)

By Our Readers

AT A meeting of the A. N. E. C. A. (American National Emancipation Centennial Authority) held recently in Cleveland and reported in the News-Journal, the statement was made that the first library in Mansfield was started by a woman of the Negro race and that recognition had not been duly given.

To keep the record straight, the first library was not started by a member of the Negro race. And to give credit where it is due, the following information is offered.

On April 17, 1864 Mrs. Ellen (John) Bradford, a young Negro woman, became a member on confession of faith of the First Congregational Church in Mansfield. Practically nothing is known of the early life of Ellen Bradford and very little about her can be authenticated. What facts are avail-

able are interwoven with loving happy memories and interesting fancies. But from 1864 till her death she was affectionately known to Congregationalists as Aunty Bradford.

Aunty Bradford did catering for a living and especially was this skill available for her church. On Sunday mornings she was always present in the Primary Room where she helped, particularly in keeping order.

Reports do not agree concerning Aunty Bradford's education. Be that as it may, everyone who knew her remembers that she loved books and believed in education. She was particularly concerned that Negro boys should learn to read. She must have been impressed and pleased to see members of the church and others taking out books from the Sunday School library — which was quite an extensive one by 1880.

Aunty Bradford lived in the little house on Marion Ave., across from the Carpenter School. This house has recently been torn down. Aunty Bradford died of cancer in July, 1887. Touching proof of her love of her church, her love of children, her love of books and her recognition of the value of education came after her death. In her will, with the exception of a small personal bequest, she left her estate to the Sunday School library. In grateful and loving memory that library was named for her.

That church burned down and the library was destroyed. In the present First Congregational Church a new library has been established. On the wall hangs a large picture of Aunty Bradford, presented by a friend. This library is also proudly named "The Aunty Bradford Library" and a plaque so marks it.

Emma Gilbert (Mrs. Rex)
678 Manchester Rd.

In regard to the library of the Congregational Church those who were active in it preferred to call it a Church Library rather than a Sunday School Library. At that time, as at the present, much interest centered in religious affairs and many valuable books were written for adult reading. Also at that time religious opinions were undergoing change which made the operation of a church library a sometimes puzzling enterprise.

Since the library was part of the church's purpose, it was right that it should fill this need. As a consequence the committee had a double incentive, to interest and to inspire. The problem of selecting books was not an easy one, for a book that was delightful reading the question always had to be asked, "What would Deacon So-and-so think of this?" As a result a careful, highly sensitive line had to be held.

The committee was composed of Mrs. Alfred Hand, Mrs. Roeliff Brinkerhoff, Mrs. Kenneth Dirlam, and Mr. Charley Harroun.

Charley, who had a sense of fun always active, wrote us when on a trip to Europe, "I hope you are not putting any books into the library that I don't approve of."

One amusing incident occurred when the librarian, writing very hurriedly for the Church Bulletin a list of the recent books and not realizing anything incongruous in the order of listing, was dismayed to read on Sunday, "Your Child and Mine", immediately followed by "From the Bottom Up."

Notwithstanding the sometimes delicate situations, an excellent Church library was built up.

To the children of the Sunday School Aunty Bradford had long been a familiar and helpful figure. Each summer she invited the children of the younger classes to her home for a picnic. Her yard was not large but it was charmingly planted and at several points had rocks piled to about three feet, a flat rock on top, and on each flat rock was laid a large doll, beautifully dressed in either light blue or pink satin. These dolls were the admiration and envy of every small girl. A slice of layer cake constituted the party refreshments.

Aunty Bradford remained for many years an active helper in the Sunday School. When she became ill at an advanced age, I was a child of seven, and was taken to see her by Mrs. Patterson. After some conversation, Mrs. Patterson, and I following, knelt down beside the bed. Mrs. Patterson made a prayer. Throughout the prayer Aunty Bradford kept fervently repeating, "Amen, Amen".

THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" IN RICHLAND COUNTY

How many other "hide-aways" for run-away slaves there were in Richland County in "Underground Railroad" days is anybody's guess. There was a persistent rumor that a tunnel for such purpose was located underground on the Old Dirlam property at 481 Park Avenue West. Though I was born in the original old house to the rear, and for years lived in both that old house and the more recent one (built about 1890) I never saw any evidence of it. It is possible, however, that Colonel Miller, who sold the property to father (Howard B. Dirlam) in 1880, might - in his earlier days been connected with the Underground Railroad - and had dug & used a tunnel in connection with such activity.

Another tunnel for refugee slaves is rumored to extend from the basement of the Stark property (365 Park Avenue West) Northward to the street. In what was earlier the Congregational Church parsonage - a frame house at the corner of Sturges & Glessner - recently torn down - there was supposed to be a trap door (used by runaways to get down into a window-less basement).

When I was in the Primary Department of the old Congregational Church on West Market Street (as it was called then - now Park Avenue West) it was in charge of a handsome, elderly negro - Aunty Bradford, who, it was said had been a slave (might possibly have come to Mansfield on the Underground Railroad) When she died, her Will provided that the proceeds of her estate (she owned a little house on Marion Avenue where she now & then invited the Primary Class for an out-door picnic) be placed on a Savings Account in The Mansfield Building & Loan Association ---the semi-annual interest to be used in purchasing new books for the Sunday School library (one of the best in Mansfield - thanks to her generosity)

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One of the most far-reaching results of the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) was the publication, two years later, of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN". The repercussions from the sale & reading of this book would be difficult to exaggerate. First published serially; in book form 20,000 copies sold within 3 weeks. The author knew what she was talking about - the Underground Railroad had run thru her Cincinnati home. One of the finest characters in the book (Simeon Halliday) was in real life, Quaker Levi Coffin, reputedly the Underground Railroad's President. Meanwhile, 8 presses were running day & night to meet the demand for the book. How many times it has been played on the stage nobody knows. Her book & the marching song "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave" led direct to the Emancipation Proclamation - which, of course, wrote "finis" to the Underground Railroad . . . an interesting chapter in American History.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: My thanks to the following, for valuable contributions of original source material: Mary Frances Day and Mrs. Daisy Barker Thomas; members of the Finney family. Volusia County (Florida) Historical Commission; to the Mansfield News-Journal and Mansfield Public Library for hearty cooperation; and to J. Robert Williams, Secretary, Oberlin College for the "Wellington Rescue." Background material was secured from Prof. Wilbur H. Siebert's "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" and from Henrietta B. Henkle's "Let My People Go."

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